



# The Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast

## EP21: When The Band is Out of Sync



You're listening to Episode 21 of the Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast.

Hey there! You're listening to Episode 21 - When the Band is Out of Sync.

I'm your host, Suz - a mindset coach to help music-preneurs build sustainable careers in music.

I go to a lot of music conferences each year and I often spend time mentoring the artists that attend.

One of the most common things to happen is a musician will approach the table and ask me for advice in dealing with the rest of their band who didn't even show up to the conference because they don't value the networking & business aspects of their career.

Or, sometimes it's because the person sitting in front of me has been delegated the band "manager" role, even though they are in the band themselves!

And other times, the band *does* show up to the conference and I'll have someone approach me, whispering to me as if they're betraying the others by talking to me without them there.

They'll ask for advice in dealing with the others who are all off drinking somewhere or who are sitting together at one panel, rather than dividing and conquering.

And I always ask them the same thing: when was the last time you all sat down and discussed what you each wanted from being in this band?

How about your expectations for what each brings to the band?

When was the last time you sat down to discuss anything that wasn't music or social media related?

I almost *a/ways* hear crickets. Once in a blue moon I'll get that they've tried but everyone ended up talking over one another and the conversation never went anywhere.

**None of this is surprising, for many reasons. The main one being: it's hard working within a group!**

Think back to high school when they'd assign group projects. No one ever liked doing those; unless you were the slacker, then you knew it was coasting time.

But usually all the work fell on one or two people either because everyone else was checked out or those one or two people were so aggressive in getting what they wanted, everyone else simply acquiesced.

I'm not gonna lie, it was usually my way or the high way when my grade was attached to it, but these days I'd like to think I'm better with group dynamics. But either way, teamwork is tough!

Not to sound cheesy, but I think we all know, teamwork makes the dream work. There's a reason schools try hard to get us to develop these skill sets - they ultimately serve us well in the real world.

Working within a team not only allows you to break up the tasks required to reach your goals, but having one another there to provide checks and balances is crucial, as is having others there for fresh perspectives and an improved derivative of our original idea.

So if there are so many benefits, why is it so fucking hard?

I'm sure there are a ton of reasons, but today I want to look at 4 reasons I notice most often and how you, *and your band*, can overcome these hurdles.

**The first reason is because many bands are made up of friendships.**

Friends who came together due to their shared love of music, not because they loved discussing marketing tactics and balancing financial statements.

When disagreements come up or someone is feeling either left out or taken for granted, addressing what needs to be done can feel like walking through a mine field.

You don't want to hurt the friendship and you also need to make sure the show goes on, so you swallow it or you wait til you explode at one another and then bury it as if it never happened.

### **Friendships are a funny thing.**

It's amazing how we can become use to certain dynamics, even if they're not ideal or healthy, and if nothing happens to challenge a particular dynamic we can live for years within a friendship without ever questioning it.

Ever sit back and think, "Man, if I met this person today I don't know if we'd still become friends?" But you still love the person, right?

However, when you *work* with friends those dynamics are tested all the time. I discussed my experience running a business with my college roommate in [Episode 3 - How I Broke Up with My Business Partner and Stayed Friends](#).

When you're in a band with friends, not only are you working together, but you're vulnerably sharing your creativity and honesty with one another. It may even be easier at times to express your discontent through your music than through a sit down conversation with one another.

But at some point, when it's time to get serious about the direction of your career, there are certain conversations that won't solve themselves through song.

As I explain in Episode 3, if you're going to take your hobby to a career that pays the bills you *must* be willing to test the friendship and set certain boundaries and expectations. But more on that later.

**The second reason it's so hard to move a band in one direction is because most musicians are reluctant to embrace the business side of things.** Whether due to disinterest, lack of confidence around certain topics, or pure overwhelm with where to start, just one musician's resistance is a hurdle.

Multiply that resistance by each band member, mixed in with multiple reasons for the resistance, and you've got a band with one member singled out to do what no one else wants to attempt, leaving that one person feeling like the weight of the band's success is squarely on their shoulders.

Intertwined with the dynamics that exist between the friendships in the band, that one member may often stay silent in their dissatisfaction or stress of the role they fell into without much choice, landing them in front of me, confessing everything that's been building up inside of them.

On the other hand, I've also seen a lot of situations where I've asked the person who does it all how they came to be in that role. Sometimes it's a matter of them simply being more outspoken and driven in what they see the goals of the band to be.

This brings us to the third reason working within a band is difficult - the leader does it all and never asks for help. If someone starts spearheading the social media, and it's going well, why would the others question it?

Additionally, if the person taking charge is particularly vocal about their decisions and preferences, the other members may be taking certain friendships into account and deciding not to challenge the status quo.

What I'm saying is it's not always a case of lazy musicians who allow all the responsibility to fall on one person. Sometimes it's a case of that one person not stepping back and allowing others to take charge in certain areas, and other times it's a little bit of both scenarios.

The last reason I notice bands don't make progress together is because even though everyone may be pulling their weight, they're all pulling in different directions.

I've seen bands who work their tails off, but after talking to each member it's clear they never got on the same page as to where they're headed.

One member is working towards a record deal, the other is working towards being an independently run band, and another is working hard to make sure this last album goes off with a bang because it's their understanding after college they'll all break up and go about their own lives.

They each can also have drastically different views of what constitutes "working hard." One will insist no outside life exists - life is only about the band.

Another will feel they are giving their all on top of managing a day job, a significant other, and other family obligations.

And another will consider it a success if they shut off their phone during rehearsals and then go back to their own life once rehearsals have ended.

Each person can be confident in their contribution to the band while having rising frustrations due to the differences in expectations that exist between each other.

**This is what happens when assumptions are made that you're all on the same page simply because you're in the same band!**

This happens SO often I started offering my Team Mediation service - helping band members voice their concerns to one another without burning bridges or being counter-productive.

It's like going to marriage counseling, and it's not cheap. So I decided to do this podcast episode to help musicians who may be facing a dilemma but don't have the funds to call in professional help.

Whatever the reason may be in your situation - one of these 4, a mixture, or something else entirely - there are ways to fix it and get everyone in your band moving toward the same goal(s).

If you're feeling frustrated with the way things are operating in your band, whether you're the leader, the slacker, the silent partner, or a little bit of each depending on the day, here's what you can do to help bring some more cohesion to your band.

First, before you start reaching out to other members, make sure you are clear on what you want for the band, why you want it, what you're willing to do to get it, and what you need others to do to make it happen.

It's incredibly important that you get clear on these 4 items before discussing things with your band. You need to be clear on your own goals and boundaries before you start dictating to others what their goals should be or opening up the discussion to additional talking points.

This is what so many fail to do and this is why conversations get away from them and nothing productive comes out of any attempt to get on the same page.

Get clear on what page you are on and what page you're going towards. What book are you writing and what is everyone else contributing to it?

Once you're clear let your band members know that you'd like to block off some time to sit down and discuss the internal structure of the band and get clarity on a few points.

Try to set up a time that's about a week out from the time you first broach the subject and ask each of them to take that week to answer those same 4 points you answered for yourself.

Request that each member bring these answers with them to the band meeting.

It's important to remember that not everyone is going to feel the way you feel and things you didn't anticipate rising to the surface may come up for others in the band now that they've had time to reflect.

The most important thing you can each do for one another, especially if you don't regularly check in with one another about these issues, is to allow each person to speak in a completely judgment-free zone.

Now obviously that can be difficult, especially if there are deeply-inter-twined histories between members in the group. Like I said, things can come up for one person that another never saw coming and each other's take on a situation can be completely different.

Which is why it can be beneficial to have a moderator there if things have gotten truly overwhelming and you are all finding yourselves at a cross-roads.

But often it simply takes open minds, closed mouths, and intent listening to allow others in the group to feel heard and say where they stand.

Even if you don't agree with them, you'll at least know how they are looking at the situation and that will allow you to manage your expectations of where everyone is at in the band and decide on what needs to happen next.

Once you've all gotten together, whoever got the ball rolling on this should start things off with why they wanted to have this meeting in the first place.

Keep all comments in the “I feel” context. Rather than saying, “Jimmy does A, B, and C and it really pisses me off,” try, “I feel Jimmy does A, B, and C and this causes me to feel disrespected, neglected, etc.”

Try your best not to make your feelings fact. Your feelings are valid, but they’re not the only “truth” in a situation.

Once you’ve had your turn to express your frustrations in the group, allow each member to voice their grievances. Don’t make this a time to get into arguments. Simply hear one another out.

Let everyone speak their mind, whether you agree with what they said or not. The important thing is they get it off their chest. I wouldn't use this time to dive into solving each individual grievance.

When I mediate within a group I usually have each member speak their grievances to me first, and then decide if any of it is worth sharing as a whole, or bringing it up with an individual separately at another point in time.

But if you can all respect each other’s space, it’s helpful if things can come out in a safe space so you can move onto solutions.

If a majority of you are all on the same page with frustrations and this becomes more of an intervention against one member, I would avoid the intervention and have one meeting without that member there to ensure you all feel the same in how you’d like to move forward with them.

I'd then delegate one person to convey these talking points to the other member and offer to have a full "family meeting" if they prefer, but usually it's better to allow them to hear it from one person and take time to digest it all.

**After everyone has let go of what they've been holding in, I'd move onto what each person wants for the band and why.**

Going over these 2 key points will allow you all to see where the biggest differences lie.

It also helps because a lot of the grievances can be solved simply by moving forward and realizing the other person was acting from a different point of view and heading down a different path than you were, and that usually helps bring closure to a certain point of contention.

Before moving on to what you are willing to do to make it happen, make sure you can all get in agreement with where the band is headed and why.

You can all have different things motivating you, but you should all be on the same page as to why the band exists and what it's ultimate purpose is.

Once that happens, then discuss what you're prepared to bring to the table. This will help set a standard of expectations. Remember when I said one member's standard might have been working hard after time with bae while another's standard was working 24/7 on all things music?

Yea... you're gonna wanna be on the same page about your expectations AND decide if you're fine agreeing to disagree. If one person is set on working 24/7 and another wants more of a work/life balance, if you're both aware of that difference and won't hold it against each other - great!

Next, make sure you each voice what you expect/need from the other members to feel like this is working. Try to avoid things like "I need you to step it up because right now you do nothing."

Stick to what we went over earlier, "I would like to feel supported, heard, appreciated in this group and in order to feel that way I need A, B, and C from so and so."

That person can either step up and agree to deliver or let you know what they *can* offer you in return. This will ensure no one person is carrying it all on their shoulders.

Lastly, when it's time to wrap up - it's helpful to grab a sheet of paper, write down the new agreements you've all decided upon - who's responsible for what, what the new expectations are, etc - and all sign it.

### **This will be your new Bill of Rights-meets-Marriage Contract.**

This all might feel arduous, gut wrenching, emotionally draining, and even a waste of time to some. But if you don't wait to do these exercises, checking in with one another as soon as things start to feel out of sync doesn't have to be so time-consuming and vulnerable.

Checking in with each other once a quarter can be very fulfilling without taking up too much time and emotional fortitude. Think of it like seasonal cleaning of one's emotional closet.

Getting on the same page will keep you moving in the same direction and allow you to breathe easier and focus more on the music and less on the tiny voices inside that you've been neglecting and pushing down.

So what do you say? Are you ready to do the hard work? If you're ready to stop suffering in silence with your band members go to [www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep21](http://www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep21) and download my Banding Together Workbook which will walk you through the 4 talking points and your new Band of Rights.

If you enjoyed what you learned today, you can access all current episodes using your preferred podcast app, including iTunes & Spotify, or by visiting [www.therockstaradvocate.com/podcast](http://www.therockstaradvocate.com/podcast).

If you're looking to get clarity on your next steps, find time to balance everything on your plate, or you'd like to have a professional mediate your next band meeting, let's talk!

**As always, feel free to email me at any time: [suz@therockstaradvocate.com](mailto:suz@therockstaradvocate.com).**

Until next time, Rockstar! Have a wonderful week and I hope to see you back here next Wednesday so we can get grounded to get rising! Take care.